The Sketch

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WIFE OF THE AIR C.-IN-C., INVASION FORCES.

LADY LEIGH-MALLORY *is the wife of Air Chief-Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, K.C.B., D.S.O., the Allied Air Commander-in-Chief of the Invasion Forces in Europe under General Eisenhower. She was Miss Doris Sawyer, and is the second daughter of the late Mr. Edmund Stratton Sawyer. She works for the Red Cross in London. Sir Trafford was A.O.C.-in-C., Fighter Command, from 1942.*

PORTRAIT BY BERTRAM PARK.

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP.

A Merry Old Soul. Some millions of years ago a number of forests and trees and plants, which up to that time had given no cause of complaint, became discouraged and went out of business. They remained dead, buried and forgotten until some ass, after a considerable interval, discovered that all this vegetable matter had become carbonised and made good fuel. Since then it has given nothing but trouble. It is doing so all over the world at present, and I, for one, cannot remember a time when it didn't. It is, no doubt, a great source of heat and energy, and it has an interesting variety of by-products. Otherwise, there is nothing to be said for it. It is heavy, clumsy, unwieldy, dirty and difficult and dangerous to get. It is a nuisance when you have it and a disaster when you haven't. I regard it as a grave reflection on the alleged inventiveness of science that it has discovered no substitute for coal. On the contrary, science has become more and more dependent on this crude commodity for all manner of things, from artificial rubber to dyes and scents, not to mention calorifics. Hence those tears—and what a lot of tears there are!

"I don't know what you 're goin' ter do abaht it, but they 've lost your second front!"

DRAWN BY L. B. MARTIN.

Rag-time.

Yes, we need synthetic coal; and is not Synthetics the greatest of all sciences nowadays? Is not all civilisation to be built on plastics? I see that they are now producing railway coaches of plastics. And look what they can do with rags! I have been reading about the remarkable feats performed with the 81,407 tons of rags which the Ministry of Supply has collected during the war. Apparently you can make almost anything of them, including an "abrasive powder" used in the metal industry, insulation for electric cables, and packing for delicate instruments. I am rejoiced to learn that my frayed collars, which I had regarded gloomily as mere superannuated relics, will make tough paper for charts and maps. I don't know whether there is any connection between this great rag-drive and the news that more neckties are to be available. Even apart from questions of style, this does not comfort me greatly, because one of the things you *can't* make out of rags, or plastics, or soya beans, or even coal, is coupons.

Feet of Clay. Nor can you, so far as I know, manufacture boot polish out of any of these raw materials. What it is manufactured from I have no idea, but whatever it is, it has disappeared from human ken. This, I confess, I regard as a severe hardship of war. Like Mr. Milne's domesticated monarch, I am not a fussy man, but I have always attached importance to the sheen of my shoes. I regard it as an important element of morale. It is difficult to put one's best foot forward in a dull and unkempt shoe. It seems, however, that I must now face this prospect without complaining. I *did* complain the other day to a friend, and he evidently regarded me as one of those people who don't know that there is a war on, for he said one of the cruellest things that have ever been said to me in my life. He said: "Try a banana-skin." We cut each other now.

"Hello! Yes! Good-bye!"

DRAWN BY KEITH MONK.

"I 've seen it—it 's fairish."

DRAWN BY JOHN G. WALTER.

Decorative Dicks and Beautiful Bulls.

For natty footwear the police have always been noted, and it is perhaps fortunate for them that they do not run to brown shades, or else the smartness of the Force would be seriously impaired. There are other forms of beauty culture which are not so familiar to the constabulary, and the police of New York felt a hot wave of shame recently when they opened their official magazine and found statements like "Hair this spring is going to be pretty neat, with less kink than last year," and headings such as

"How to Look Well in Slacks" and "A Short Cut to Glamour." Affronted at the suggestion that they had ever looked anything *but* well in slacks, they were about to tear down the City Hall, when one Detective-Inspector, obviously trained in methods of swift observation, discovered that these snappy items were intended for their wives and for New York's 237 policewomen. Peace and good humour were restored, but it was a near thing, for the New York police set a high value on their two-fisted masculine qualities.

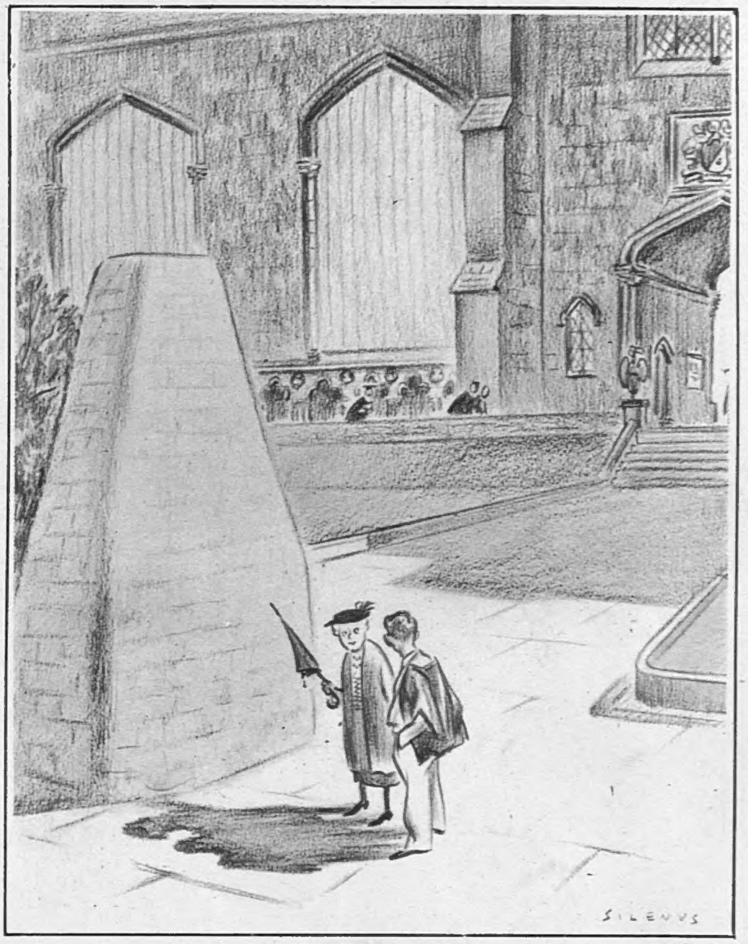
Spare a Copper. A natural association of ideas leads me from cops to coppers—in the sense, however, of coin of the realm. Here again there seems to be a distressingly short supply. I have not noticed it myself; my pocket always seems to contain a higher proportion of copper to silver than I could desire—except, of course, when I want a copper or two for a bus-fare, or a telephone or a stamp. Apparently it is not so everywhere, and the shortage seems to be particularly acute in bars and places of refreshment. It is stated that anybody who can put a pound's-worth of coppers on the bar can have one "on the house." And yet in 1940, when the Royal Mint ceased to produce them, there were two thousand million penny-pieces in circulation. Another great mystery of nature, like Where Do the Flies Go in Winter?—what becomes of all the pennies? The Mint does not know, and is not yielding to this vulgar clamour for pence. It says that we must manage somehow with our three hundred thousand Chinese threepences and our one thousand four hundred and forty million halfpennies. A bleak prospect!

Brightly Gleams Our Banner. It is my privilege from time to time—and I value it—to record the march of feminine progress during this war. It can be said confidently that whenever the fight is on, women are in the van. A striking example of this fact comes from the Anzio beachhead. When our reinforcements land there, what is the first thing they see? The thin khaki line of heroes? The Union Jack or the Stars and Stripes fluttering bravely in the breeze? Not at all! They see a line of what appears at first sight to be variegated bunting, but on closer inspection proves to be an array of feminine—well, my source of information calls them "fripperies," and I am content with the term, without particularising further. These are the proud battle insignia of Army nurses, who were among the first to set foot on that beach of fate. Let none disfavour this as out of the military tradition; there are times when the week's wash may be as honourable—and, indeed, as picturesque—as a ship full-dressed with bunting.

"Must be one of those offensive sweeps they talk about on the wireless!"

DRAWN BY GEORGE DAVIES.

Press the Button. But there is not only the Beachhead Front; there is also, and always, the Home Front. According to some, it is the most important front of all, and we have been hearing a lot about it lately. Much is being said about this grim ogre called Drudgery. "The house,"



"I suppose the Dean will be debagged as soon as peace is declared." (DRAWN BY SILENUS.)

declares Lord Woolton, "which for poorer people has so often been a matter of domestic drudgery can, by the use of science, be made into a place where a woman has leisure and pleasure." Professor Sir Jack Drummond would enlist the aid of science in another cause. He maintains that with a little scientific knowledge the average British housewife could even be taught to cook well. He deplores the constant swallowing of "vitamin pills" and urges that, if mothers only realised the invigorating properties of (say) cabbage-heart and watercress, they would not spend their substance so freely at the chemist's.

A Kiss for Cinderella. Well, we are all to some extent domestic drudges nowadays, and I don't think we find it such a terrible affliction. (For myself, I should be even more a domestic drudge than I am if I could only get that shoe-polish hereinbefore mentioned.) I am glad to see that a spirited woman contributor to a weekly paper takes up the challenge and has a good word or two for the old-fashioned occupation of housework, now, it would seem, discredited as mere "drudgery." "Women should look at the other side, the cheerful, constructive side of home planning. . . . A job of work—something to do, to create! Something of which they are proud." Without resorting to infuriating *clichés* about woman's place being in the home, I have a notion that this aspect of "drudgery" will always appeal to right-minded women, and that most of them will prefer it to office drudgery, which can be very drab and desolating indeed. By all means let us have Lord Woolton's "science" to save tedium and exhaustion, but science in this connection seems to resolve itself into the one word "electricity." My experience is that electricity is by no means an unmingled blessing. It is a great power *when it works*; but man is indeed a helpless creature when he is surrounded by gadgets which he does not understand and cannot mend.

Skippers and Kippers. Anyhow, we had better leave a little room for hand labour, because it is calculated that in the Brave New World after the war there will be about twenty million homeless refugees and even more

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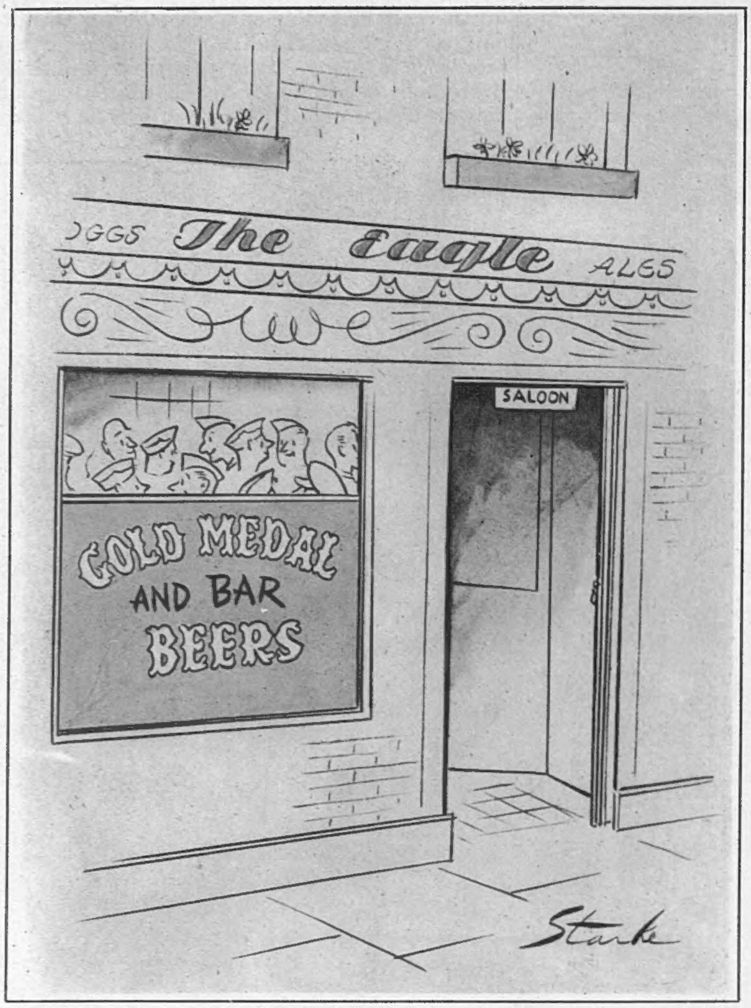


Bubble Reputation. (DRAWN BY STARKE.)

Continued.]

unemployed in Europe alone. We had better begin to plan for them at once, and my suggestion is that those who are reasonably good sailors should take to fishing. Not that I wish—far from it !—to add to the revolting volume of cod and hake on the slabs, but this industry does seem to be the quick way to affluence. I read of skippers earning up to £140 a week, and mates up to £100, and though I do not grudge it to them (for theirs is a hard life), I do respectfully ask why I cannot occasionally get a sole, a haddock or even a kipper. Failing fish, our unemployed (if Sir William Beveridge has not accounted for them all) had better take to the gentler vocation of growing flowers. Consider the lilies-of-the-valley, how they grow—at fifteen shillings the exiguous bunch. Carnations 5s. each, tulips 3s. each, narcissi a shilling, and violets about threepence each. True indeed it is that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these ! I imagine that a suitable bouquet for the bride must cost a young husband about a month's income, and what it must cost an admirer to send up a really worthy tribute to the Leading Lady, I tremble to think.

Bird Thou Never Wert.

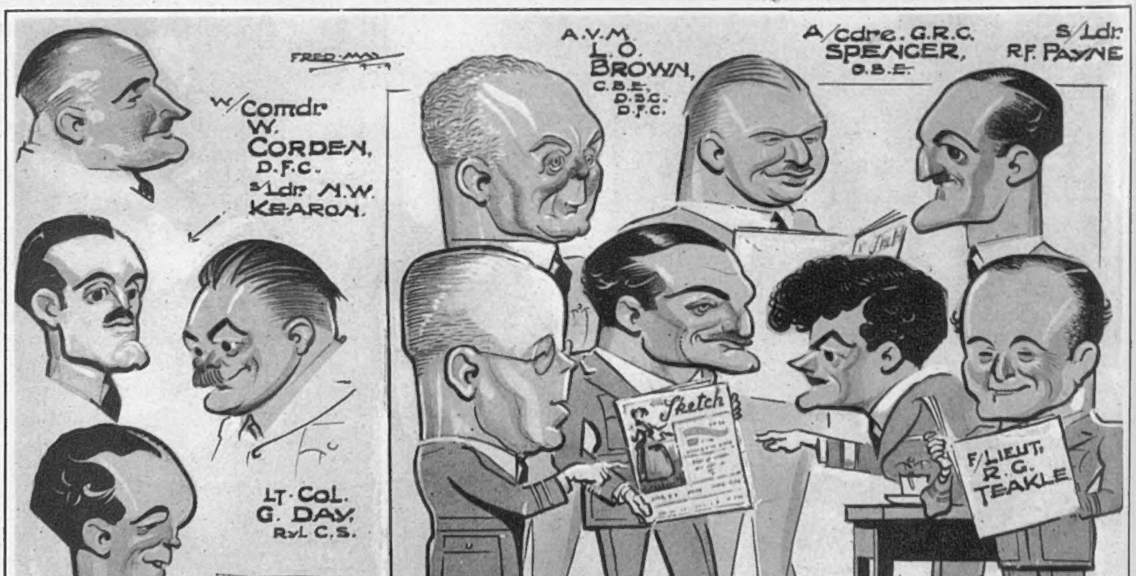
There is another career to which many of our more talented unemployed may aspire, and it seems to open almost unlimited possibilities to anybody who can produce animal noises anywhere between the uvula and the frontal sinuses ; but it is an occupation which has incurred severe criticism in the House of Commons. Referring to a group of artistes whom he rather crudely described as " female crooners," Earl Winterton asked if they were really necessary to entertain the Forces, and observed that " the women Cockney singers reminded him of the caterwauling of an inebriated cockatoo." Now it has never been my privilege to meet a cockatoo in his cups, nor even in his hiccups, but I can well believe that in that condition he would croon with great feeling and might be in great demand at the B.B.C. But, on a point of order, I ask whether cockatoos do in fact caterwaul ? Probably by a quite false philology, I have always associated caterwauling with cats, and it is of cats that I naturally think when I hear female crooners. However, I do not wish to be pedantic, or to fall out with Earl Winterton on a mere point of natural history. I take it that almost any Zoo noises, short of the roaring of the tigers or the barking of the sea-lions, would meet his point, and there I should respectfully and fully agree with him. If not the Zoo, then the farmyard would supply ample analogies.

The Undistinguished Service Order.

Then, of course, from our body of unemployed we shall need a large number of officials, and here the field is practically unlimited. If there are not enough jobs to go round for all the officials, you can always find work for them in making returns and statistics about other officials. I will confess that I do not love them or their methods in general, but there is one type of very minor civil servant for whom I have a considerable admiration. I conduct most of my important affairs with H.M. Postmaster-General through a little sub-post office. It is " manned " by four young women, the eldest about twenty-one and the youngest (by appearance) straight from the Kindergarten. The public at the counter is seldom less than two-deep, and no praise could be too high for the skill, speed, patience and courtesy with which these handmaidens turn their attention to the innumerable different details which arise even in a sub-post office. I don't suppose they will ever get medals for war service, but they certainly deserve them.

Dog Eats Dog.

" We at the Ministry of Food," says Colonel Llewellin, " live on food and not our forms." Strange ! I had pictured these officials as chewing paper all day long. But if they live on the food which they have secured to the population—well, then, they are not doing so badly, and they ought to be grateful to themselves and to each other.



Here we have a certain GROUP H.Q. STAFF, R.A.F. *Air Commodore Brown is holding a watching brief over several of his staff who seem to have a special interest in " The Sketch."*

CARICATURES BY FRED MAY.

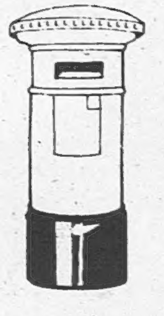
The eighty-fifth of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of " The Sketch " is by* DAVID WRIGHT.

"'S'ORL RIGHT, DUCKS! YOU'VE GOT ME WITH YER!"

DRAWN BY FRANK REYNOLDS.

Please forward

By JOYCE DENNYS.



MY DEAR ROBERT—Mrs. Whinebite came round a short time ago to ask me whether I would take part in a Women's Institute Shakespeare Competition.

"I'm afraid I haven't got time," I said hastily.

"It only has to last ten minutes," said Mrs. Whinebite in a wheedling voice.

I have often thought it would be rather fun to be Hamlet for ten minutes, and I said so now. "You can't be Hamlet," said Mrs. Whinebite quite firmly; "your legs are too thin, for one thing. I thought a little piece of 'The Merchant of Venice' would be rather nice."

"'The quality of mercy is not strained,'" I said, trying to give the impression that I knew the play, which I don't. "Who would I have to be?"

"Portia."

"I'm too old for Portia."

"I know you are. But you're younger than some people in the W.I."

"I'd rather be Shylock."

"Don't be absurd, Henrietta."

"I mean, I've got quite a big nose, to begin with, and with a sort of straggling beard——"

"I shall lose my patience with you in a minute."

"Besides, if my legs are too thin for Hamlet, they're too thin for Portia."

"It isn't the Trial scene. It's that bit where Portia is talking to Nerissa, her maid, in a skirt."

"I don't really *want* to do it," I said miserably, for I could feel the net closing in on me.

"Don't you want to Do Something for your village?"

"Yes, but I might Do Something badly."

"We'll have plenty of rehearsals," said Mrs. Whinebite cheerfully. "Thank you so much, Henrietta. I knew you'd come up to scratch." Then she went away.

I got out my Shakespeare, which is large and heavy and has very small print, and began to study my part.

"What is this continual low muttering?" said Charles that evening, laying down *The Times* and looking across at me.

"I'm learning my part," I said. "I'm acting in the W.I. Shakespeare Competition—but only for ten minutes."

"I should have thought you had enough to do."

"So should I, actually. But Mrs. Whinebite seemed to think I ought to Do Something More. I'm being Portia."

"'The quality of mercy is not strained,'" said Charles.

"I suppose you wouldn't like to hear me in my part?"

"No," said Charles, and retired behind *The Times* again.

"'Of course, you'll look quite different with some make-up on.'"

Mrs. Whinebite was very patient at rehearsals. Nerissa, who had been the star pupil at an elocution class, arrived word-perfect, and apparently undismayed by the intricacies of Shakespeare's words.

"Don't say, 'By my troath,' Henrietta: say 'By me troth,' to rhyme with 'froth.' Go on."

"I can't remember this bit. It doesn't seem to make sense."

"My dear, it's perfectly simple. 'Such a hare is madness the youth to skip o'er the meshes of good council the cripple.' It's Reasoning. They used to do it in Shakespeare's time. It says later on, 'But this *Reasoning* is not in the fashion to choose me a husband.' Now do you understand?"

"Not very well, I'm afraid, Mrs. Whinebite."

"Haven't you ever done any Shakespeare before?" said Mrs. Whinebite, looking helplessly at me.

"Well, I was once a Wave in 'The Tempest,' at school, and another time I was a Greek Youth in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.'"

"'I was once a Wave in "The Tempest," at school.'"

Mrs. Whinebite sighed. I began to feel sorry for her, and plunged into my part with renewed energy. "'I am much afeared,'" I declaimed, leaning roguishly towards Nerissa, "'that my Lady, his mother, played false with a smith!'"

"I think we'll have to cut that," said Mrs. Whinebite.

"But Mrs. Whinebite! It's the only bit I'm really sure of."

"It would be," said Mrs. Whinebite, who was now looking positively exhausted; and the rehearsal came to an end.

The next morning she arrived early, while I was cleaning the bath, her arms full of fancy dresses. "I've borrowed these from the Pantomime Club," she said. "You remember that year when we had the chorus in those pretty mediæval dresses, with head-dresses made of silver doyleys?"

"I don't think I'm quite the type for mediæval clothes, do you?" I said. "I sort of feel that something with a frill round the neck would make me look younger."

"I shouldn't worry about trying to look young," said Mrs. Whinebite. "Everybody in the audience will know that you are——"

"Don't say it, please."

Mrs. Whinebite pulled a pink mediæval garment over my head. "That's not your colour," she said, and pulled it off again. Then she tried a blue, and after that a mauve and a yellow. All the dresses were too large for me. My neck rose out of them, thin and scraggy, and my pinched and anxious face bore the visible ravages of a recent heavy cold. "Of course, you'll look quite different with some make-up on," said Mrs. Whinebite, for whom, I must say, my heart was bleeding. "Those Mary Tudor caps are really very becoming if you part your hair in the middle and fluff it out at the sides."

"Yes, Mrs. Whinebite."

"Anyhow," said Mrs. Whinebite, whisking the yellow dress over my head and dislodging my two hair-pins, Castor and Pollux, in the process, "the W.I. ought to be very grateful to you for making this effort, *whatever* you look like."

At the Competition I remembered my words better than I thought I would, but instead of saying, "chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces," I said "picture palaces," which got the biggest laugh of the afternoon; but Mrs. Whinebite was very nice about it.

Lady B. said I looked like somebody in a dressing-gown going to the bath for the first time after a long, long illness.

Always your affectionate Childhood's Friend,

HENRIETTA.

"I remembered my words better than I thought I would."

IN A BARRACKS GARDEN!

This photograph is not a nostalgic pre-1939 snapshot from the South of France, or of some luxurious country house in a favoured corner of England. It was taken in the garden of Rathbaron, Clendon Road, Toorak, Victoria, Australia, a house used as barracks by the W.A.A.A.F. When the girls are off duty they can enjoy a dip in the swimming-pool, and sun bathe on the spacious lawns. Uniform restrictions do not apply to bathing suits, which are chosen in accordance with the owners' personal tastes.

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

I HAVE not the smallest hesitation in giving the top corner of this page this week to "THE SHIPBUILDERS" (New Gallery)—a story of the fall and rise of the Clyde shipyards, the grim years of pre-war idleness, and the full recovery with the outbreak of war. "The Shipbuilders" is only a small picture, but it has a heart as big as St. Paul's. I suspect it cost very little to produce. There is no elaborate studio work. The backgrounds are plain Clydeside, and the real thing. The characters are mostly simple people living in tiny homes. The huge drama of the Clyde, and the power it stands for, and the empire it helps to hold together, is keyed down to the immediate viewpoint of the man-in-the-yard. John Baxter, the director, has plainly envisaged the thing from the inside looking out. He has tried to show us what the problem of the Clyde means to thousands of men and women who depend on shipbuilding for their daily bread. With the help of Morland Graham as a riveter, Clive Brook as a shipyard owner, and a cast which I regret I cannot particularise, owing to the fatuous modern habit of printing a list of players without the names of the parts they play; with the help of these good people, and a good, sound script, he has done a good, sound, memorable job.

I am all for a bit of mystery on the screen myself, but I can't help feeling that "THE FALLEN SPARROW" (London Pavilion) rather overdoes it. It opens with a young man, played by John Garfield, a jumpy, worried young man called Kit for McKittrick, arriving in New York from an Arizona ranch. He has come to New York to investigate the death of a policeman friend of his, one Louie Lepetino, who either fell or was pushed from an hotel window. And you quickly realise that Kit's inquiries are not popular around town, and that Kit himself is not in the best shape to make them.

Kit, in fact, is a mental wreck. He has escaped from a Spanish prison, where he was tortured by the Nazis after fighting with the International Brigade. He has hidden something that the Nazis want. He knows that they have followed him to America, and will torture him again. He is, as I say, a wreck. He talks aloud to himself. The sound of dripping water sends him into a profuse sweat. He thumps out discords on the piano with clenched fists. He flies to the brandy bottle. He is constantly listening for the footsteps of his chief enemy, a man with a dragging foot. His hand shakes, and there are moments when his mouth goes drooly, like Oswald's in the last act of "Ghosts." He 's a mess all right.

Well, I 've nothing against all this, except that Mr. Garfield doesn't seem to me to act it very well. It is a legitimate bit of atmosphere-creating, and if it led up to any really solid climax it would be fine. But long before the climax, which isn't so solid anyway, the atmosphere has been dispersed in numerous side-issues. There are too many mysteries in "The Fallen Sparrow," and too many people. And the chief mystery is to discover who all these people are, and what in mischief they are doing.

To begin with, there are three heroines—Barby (Patricia Morison), Toni (Maureen O'Hara), and Whitney (Martha O'Driscoll)—all lush, all glamorous, all well-set-up in evening gowns. Barby appears to be a socialite. Toni is a Mystery Woman. Whitney is an "ex-deb," now a professional singer at the Fifty Club. As far as it is possible to make out, Kit *has* been engaged to Barby, *is* in love with Toni, and keeps a boyhood affection in his heart for Whitney; but at some time during the film he kisses each of the three.

To complicate matters still further, Barby *says* she is engaged to Ab, a Friend, while all the time she is in love with Otto, a "Norwegian" refugee. Whitney is really in love with Ab, but is involved in some way with Anton, a Belgian pianist. Toni may or may not be married to Otto, but says she is in love with Kit. There is also a French count, who is supposed to be Toni's grandfather, and a crippled scientist (Walter Slezak), who is Otto's uncle. All these people tend to go about in a claque, gathering at night-clubs and parties and dinners, and making themselves frightfully conspicuous, one would have thought, to the New York police and the Federals. How such a curiously assorted bunch came together in the first place, why they choose to isolate themselves so patently from the rest of the social world, and in just what way all these meetings are necessary, remains a little hazy. Whitney—I think it is Whitney—seems to put her finger neatly on the spot when she observes to Kit, after one of his calling-all-caste parties, "Then there 's nothing you really want us for?"

"STANDING ROOM ONLY" (Plaza) is a very minor essay in entertainment, but a successful one. No one is likely to come out at the end of the film feeling that he has had a deep, spiritual experience. On the other hand, few people are likely to come out feeling that they have wasted their money. It is now twenty-four hours since I saw "Standing Room Only." The details of the piece are fast slipping from my mind, and I even had to refer to my programme to verify the title. Nevertheless, I have a clear impression that, for those ninety-odd minutes at the Plaza yesterday, I was agreeably entertained.

What can it have been about, now? Washington—overcrowding—Paulette Goddard and Fred MacMurray dressed up as servants. Edward Arnold, posing as a butler, murmuring deprecatingly, as he almost drops a dish, "Excuse me, Sir; but I am used to the grip on *English* china." A rare moment of comedy, that; a real moment. Ah, yes; it is coming back now. Mr. MacMurray is the general manager of a toy factory, who is sent to Washington to get a munitions contract. And Miss Goddard goes along with him as his secretary. And Washington is so crowded that they have to take a job as cook and butler. And she cannot cook, neither can he buttle. But, what with the servant shortage as well as the housing shortage, they muddle along somehow to the right man's dinner-table and the right man's kitchen. And then Mr. MacMurray's fiancée turns up, and his employer turns up, and his business rival turns up, and the situation becomes so complicated that we had best just skip it.

Does this sound funny? Probably not. Is it funny? Decidedly so. Mr. MacMurray and Miss Goddard may not be the greatest actors on the

THE BEST PLAYS.

*Starred by "The Sketch." ***=highest value.*

*** "**BLITHE SPIRIT**" (*Duchess*). Noel Coward's play. Betty Ann Davies, Cecil Parker, Irene Browne, Beryl Measor.

*** "**PINK STRING AND SEALING WAX**" (*Duke of York's*). 1880 Brighton comedy. Iris Hoey, Dorothy Hyson, David Horne.

** "**THE DANCING YEARS**" (*Adelphi*). Ivor Novello in his romantic musical play, with Muriel Barron and Roma Beaumont.

** "**THE CRADLE SONG**" (*Apollo*). John Gielgud's production of Spanish play. Wendy Hiller, Frederick Leister, Muriel Aked.

** "**SOMETHING IN THE AIR**" (*Palace*). Musical, with Jack Hulbert, Cicely Courtneidge.

** "**ARC DE TRIOMPHE**" (*Phœnix*). Ivor Novello's Paris cavalcade—1906-1925—with Mary Ellis, Raymond Lovell, Peter Graves, Elisabeth Welch.

** "**PANAMA HATTIE**" (*Piccadilly*). Musical comedy, with Bébé Daniels, Richard Hearne, Max Wall, Ivan Brandt, Claude Hulbert.

** "**STRIKE A NEW NOTE**" (*Prince of Wales*). George Black's revue, with the rising generation and Sid Field.

** "**MY SISTER EILEEN**" (*Savoy*). American slapstick with Sally Gray, Coral Browne, Max Bacon.

** "**ARSENIC AND OLD LACE**" (*Strand*). Witty, murderous farce. Lilian Braithwaite, Mary Jerrold, Naunton Wayne, Frank Pettingell, Edmund Willard.

** "**WHILE THE SUN SHINES**" (*Globe*). Rattigan's inter-allied complications without tears. Jane Baxter, Ronald Squire, Hugh McDermott.

** "**THE LISBON STORY**" (*Hippodrome*). Play with music.

** "**SWEETER AND LOWER**" (*Ambassadors*). Second edition of "Sweet and Low" revue: Hermione Gingold and Henry Kendall.

** "**JUNIOR MISS**" (*Saville*). Comedy with the accent on youth. Joan White, Peggy Cummins.

** "**THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT**" (*Aldwych*). Wonderful acting by the Lunts in Robert Sherwood play.

* "**A SOLDIER FOR CHRISTMAS**" (*Wyndham's*). Light comedy: Joyce Barbour, Robert Beatty.

* "**THE DRUID'S REST**" (*St. Martin's Theatre*). Emlyn Williams's light comedy, with Gladys Henson, Michael Shepley.

* "**AN IDEAL HUSBAND**" (*Westminster*). Donat's ideal Wilde revival. Irene Vanbrugh, Martita Hunt, Esme Percy.

* "**THIS WAS A WOMAN**" (*Comedy*). Sonia Dresdel, John Bryning, Nova Pilbeam in effective melodrama.

* "**LOVE FOR LOVE**" (*Haymarket*). Congreve comedy with John Gielgud, Yvonne Arnaud, Leslie Banks, Leon Quartermaine.

* "**TEN LITTLE NIGGERS**" (*Cambridge*). Agatha Christie's thriller. Linden Travers, Allan Jeayes, Terence de Marney.

* "**ACACIA AVENUE**" (*Vaudeville*). Comedy. Gordon Harker, Hubert Gregg, Dorothy Hamilton, Megs Jenkins.

* "**THE LOVE RACKET**" (*Victoria Palace*). High-speed musical with Arthur Askey and Carol Raye.

N.B.—While we shall always do our best to keep this list up to date, we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur. Consult your daily paper; ring up the theatre to avoid disappointment.

"Heaven is Round the Corner" (Tivoli) exploits the voice of a new singer (LENI LYNN) *as Joan Sedley. Daughter of a farmer who has remarried, she takes old Dougal's* (WILL FYFFE) *advice and leaves her home farm for an operatic career in Paris. Her hopes of opera dwindle to an engagement in a doubtful night-club and eventual return to run the farm in war-time, where her lover duly follows her.*

screen, but they have a nice, crisp way with the lighter comedy rôles. Edward Arnold, as the toy magnate, and Roland Young, as a henpecked husband, are not the men to waste small opportunities; and they have plenty of them. The film has the fresh, clean look of new goods, elegantly wrapped and deftly handled. All in all, if you have an hour and a half to spend on laughter, you might do a lot worse than go along to the Plaza this week.

I read in a trade paper that "ALI BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES," the new Technicolor film at the Gaumont, is "engaging novelty entertainment with big escapist pull." Thousands of other people will probably think so, but as I understand it, the producers had a loftier motive in making the picture.

Only the forty jar-hiding thieves and the "Open Sesame" incident have been retained from the original "Arabian Nights" story. "Otherwise," explains Arthur Lubin, the director, in a Hollywood report, "it is an original story drawing a parallel with to-day's war activity and the Axis subjugation of peace-loving peoples." Out of respect for an ally, the villains of the piece are no longer Chinese, as they have been in the "Chu Chin Chow" versions of the tale, but invading Mongols. It is noticeable that the leading villain, Hulugu Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, speaks with something resembling a German accent. It is noticeable, too, that the second villain, the treacherous Prince Cassim, is a collaborationist. They don't actually call him a Quisling, but you get the idea.

Ali Baba himself is the son of the Caliph of Baghdad, who has been killed in the Mongol invasion. The boy Ali (Scotty Beckett), wandering in the hills, has been adopted by a band of patriotic thieves and brought up in their treasure cave. Arrived at manhood, he becomes Jon Hall —what a break for an orphan boy!—and rides out at the head of this riff-raff, scouring the desert for caravans and trolling a theme-song, "Forty and One For All."

On one of his desert forays he encounters the beauteous Princess Amara (Maria Montez) bathing in an oasis. It will be no surprise to the astute spectator, although it is a great surprise to Ali and Amara, to find that they have plighted their troth in childhood, and still love one another with a surpassing devotion. Amara, however, is currently betrothed to the tyrant Khan, and is, in fact, bound for Baghdad to marry him.

I shall not attempt to describe the rigours of their courtship, nor how Ali is captured and escapes, nor the final assault on the city during the royal wedding feast, which Ali attends as a rich merchant, with his followers concealed in the celebrated jars. You will not be unduly anxious, I take it, as to the result, even when the Khan's rude soldiery plunge their scimitars into the mouths of the oil jars. The Thieves aren't there, possibly? Positively, the Thieves aren't there.

This pulsating drama of the East was originally planned, like its predecessor, "The Arabian Nights," to co-star the team of Maria Montez, Jon Hall and Sabu. Sabu, having temporarily left the movies for the Army, the part of the Princess's faithful slave, designed for the Indian boy, was given to one Turhan Bey, a somewhat older youth of Turkish origin. Mr. Bey it is who has the honour of cutting down the Mongol pennant at the end of the picture, and running up the star-and-crescent flag of Baghdad. "Ali Baba," like the other films of the series, is done in the most ardent kind of Technicolor. My own fancy is for the scenes in which Mr. Hall and his followers ride out on their forays on black horses, dressed in sky-blue and cherry-colour; bad camouflage, one would have thought, for desert work, but gay, indubitably gay.

"Lifeboat" (Odeon) is Alfred Hitchcock's production of a John Steinbeck story. Aboard the lifeboat are (l. to r.) Ritterhouse (HENRY HULL); *Kovac* (JOHN HODIAK); *Stanley Garrett* (HUME CRONYN); *Joe* (CANADA LEE); *international journalist Connie Porter* (TALLULAH BANKHEAD); *and Army nurse Alice Mackenzie* (MARY ANDERSON). *They quarrel; tell stories of their secret lives, become weak from thirst and hunger—all except the German, played by Walter Slezak (not in our picture), who, having secreted a flask of fresh water for himself, generally lives up to the name his nation has made for itself, till he is tipped overboard and the others rescued by warship.*

In Warner's "The Hard Way" (Regal), Helen Chernin (IDA LUPINO; *left*), *shrewd, ambitious, seeks fulfilment through her sister Katherine's* (JOAN LESLIE) *theatre career. Katherine scores a series of brilliant successes, with sister Helen steering her course away from the man she loves. Losing her bloom, turned down for an ingénue part, Katherine turns back to her lover, and for Helen all that remains is the harbour's black depths.*

EVENTS AND NOTABLE PERSONALITIES:

Wartime SCHOOLGIRL CHORISTERS *lined the path from Laughton village church when* MR. F. C. PARKS *and his bride,* MISS C. L. SPENCER, *left after their wedding.*

LIEUT. KATHLEEN DE VILLIERS, AIR CHIEF-MARSHAL SIR ARTHUR HARRIS, *Commanding R.A.F. Bomber Command, and* LADY HARRIS *attended the special performance of "Acacia Avenue" in aid of the R.A.F. Malcolm Clubs.*

SECTION OFFICER HOOD-CREE, W.A.A.F., *and* CAPTAIN BRENO DUARTE DA CUNHA *were guests at the Simpsons' Services Club lunch in honour of the Brazilian Air Mission.*

MISS JOY SPILMAN *was a débutante at the Queen Charlotte's Ball.*

LIEUT. PETER POWELL, R.N.V.R., *is the author of the prize-winning play, "The Two Children," produced at the Arts Theatre with* MISS ANNE FIRTH *as the heroine. The play was chosen out of 600 entries.*

The crew of the Fortress "Daring Doris" chaired their pilot after a raid on Berlin. L. to r.—2nd Lieut. D. H. Hassing, S/Sergt. J. F. Baya, T/Sergt. R. H. Rhodes, S/Sergt. W. J. Gay, 1st Lieut. W. F. Cely (pilot), 2nd Lieut. E. C. Restorick, S/Sergt. N. Hetman, S/Sergt. G. B. Corzine, S/Sergt. D. P. Huddy and T/Sergt. S. Tyleshevski.

"This Was a Woman," at the Comedy, was originally called "The Da… Potential." Valentine (GREY BLAKE), *Olivia* (SONIA DRESDEL), *Fene…* (NOVA PILBEAM) *and Terry* (JOHN BRYNING; *l. to r.*).

THE WEEK'S SELECTED PICTURES.

BRIGADIER GERALD LATHBURY, M.B.E., *of the Paratroops, was decorated with the D.S.O. at a recent Investiture. He is seen leaving the Palace with* MRS. LATHBURY.

DR. J. A. PARTRIDGE *wheeled his bride,* MISS FRANCESCO BROCK, *daughter of the late Commander F. A. Brock, to her mother's house at Boxmoor after their wedding at St. John's, Boxmoor.*

SIR HENRY WOOD, *here holding bundles of bâtons, has conducted over 10,000 performances. The concert in honour of his seventy-fifth birthday, and the fiftieth anniversary of the first Prom., is fixed for March 25 at the Albert Hall.*

MISS MARY EVELYN MARTIN, *only child of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Martin, is engaged to Captain the Hon. Quintin Hogg, The Rifle Brigade, M.P. for Oxford City, son of Viscount Hailsham.*

MISS DIANA BARNATO, *younger daughter of Wing Commander Woolf Barnato, is engaged to Wing Commander Derek Ronald Walker, D.F.C., son of Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Walker. She is a pilot in the A.T.A.*

LIEUT.-COLONEL BEN LYON *is now head of the Radio Section of the U.S. Eighth Air Force Public Relations Office. Before that he served under Major-Gen. Ira C. Eaker in the Mediterranean theatre of war.*

H.M. THE QUEEN *attended an exhibition and sale of the Duchess of Northumberland's "Spare a Trinket" Fund for the A.T.S.* MRS. BRIAN THURSBY PELHAM *received her.* CHIEF CONTROLLER WHATELEY, *A.T.S., was present.*

DOREEN RAY, *previously a dress designer, has undertaken very different work to further the war effort. Here she is with "Stourhead Lagor" at the British Percheron Horse Society's Spring Stallion show and sale at Histon.*

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

LORD WINTERTON—*for saying women radio crooners remind him of the caterwauling of an inebriated cockatoo.*

HOW often Lord Winterton has heard "the caterwauling of an inebriated cockatoo" is not certain, but he does not like it, and recently in the House of Commons he sternly compared it with the sounds made by the women radio crooners of the B.B.C., suggesting that its reaction on troops was a matter which should be studied from a scientific point of view.

THE BISHOP OF COLOMBO—*for having a surprising resemblance to the Prime Minister.*

CORPORAL ALICE HOLDEN—*for saving a trapped air-gunner in a blazing 'plane at the risk of her life.*

WREN ELIZABETH GLEN BOOTH—*for her gallantry in dragging out the observer from a blazing bomber.*

OUR photograph of THE RT. REV. CECIL D. HORSLEY, BISHOP OF COLOMBO, with its beneficent smile, is pleasantly reminiscent of the Prime Minister. It is, in fact, almost a "twin" resemblance. The Bishop was photographed after service on board H.M.S. *Ceylon*, the cruiser which was adopted by the town of Dundee.

MR. A. J. MUNNINGS, R.A.—*for being a very sporting President of the Royal Academy.*

THE Film Stars' annual prize—the "Oscars" of the American Motion Picture Academy Awards for the best leading male and female performances, have been won for 1943 by the veteran PAUL LUKAS, for his acting in the film "Watch on the Rhine," and by a newcomer, JENNIFER JONES, for her performance in "The Song of Bernadette," of which a double page of pictures appears elsewhere in this issue.

PAUL LUKAS *and* JENNIFER JONES—*for being winners of the coveted "Oscars" for the best leading film performances of 1943.*

LABOUR shortage in the household of seventy-seven-year-old SIR LEONARD HILL, famous physiologist, showed him how ignorant scientists are about housekeeping. For six weeks, to a schedule of alternate duty and rest, he and his wife have done all the work a gardener and maids used to do—except the dusting. This, says Sir Leonard, "only stirs up the germs."

Scientist SIR LEONARD HILL—*for saying when he does his housework he never, never dusts, for "it only stirs up germs."*

LAST week MR. A. J. MUNNINGS, R.A., beat Mr. Augustus John, R.A., in the final ballot for the Presidency of the Royal Academy by 24 votes to 11. He is known for his slick paintings of exquisitely groomed hunters, usually backed by the clear air of a summer morning; his recreations are hunting and racing. After the blitzing of his Chelsea home, he and his wife have now settled on Exmoor, and he is concentrating on landscapes.

TWENTY-ONE-YEAR-OLD CORPORAL ALICE HOLDEN, W.A.A.F., of Stirling, was awarded the B.E.M. (Military) for a splendid deed of heroism. A bomber crashed and burst into flames 150 yards from where she worked. As she ran towards the wreckage débris hurtled through the air as petrol tanks blew up, and cries for help came from the tail-gunner, pinned inside his turret enveloped in flames. Despite exploding ammunition and intense heat, Holden worked till he was freed and she dragged him clear. Corporal Holden has been four years a W.A.A.F.; her husband serves with the Fleet Air Arm.

WREN ELIZABETH GLEN BOOTH was awarded the B.E.M. (Military) for a splendid act of gallantry when a Fleet Air Arm 'plane crashed in flames on a bombing range. She drove an officer to the scene and helped to drag out the observer, while explosions scattered burning débris and petrol around them. She beat out the flames from the airman's clothes and then drove him nine miles over a tortuous route to a doctor. "Wren Booth," says the *London Gazette*, "then drove back to the scene of the crash, although . . . she must have been suffering from shock, and later drove the doctor 33 miles to the Fleet Air Arm Station."

DESCENDANTS OF "THE JERSEY LILY."

LADY BARTLETT, JEMIMA *and* LUCY *are granddaughter and great-granddaughters of the beautiful actress Lily Langtry—the "Jersey Lily" of Edwardian days. In 1937 Miss Mary Malcolm, as she then was, only daughter of Sir Ian and Lady Malcolm of Poltalloch, married Sir Basil Bartlett, now Lieut.-Colonel, Intelligence Corps. He had then been on the stage for seven years, learning stage technique, in order to write plays and scenarios. Their six-year-old daughter Jemima recently returned from a three-and-a-half years' visit to California, where she was staying with some distant Malcolm relatives. Lucy is two and a half years old.* [PHOTOGRAPH BY GERMAINE KANOVA.]

The leading lady of R.K.O.'s horror film, " The Ghost Ship," appears only in silhouette as a shadow moving across the side of the ship. A shadow parade was held to choose a girl for the part.

ROSEMARY LA PLANCHE, *a competitor, and her silhouette.*

PATTI BRILL, *a co*

HOLLYWOOD recently went on the hunt for the loveliest and most curvilinear feminine silhouette obtainable. It was wanted for the leading woman's part in R.K.O.'s new psychological horror film, " The Ghost Ship," in which she is seen only as a shadow moving on the side of the ship. Competitors for the rôle were dressed in skin-tight bathing-suits, and paraded behind a screen, so that their silhouettes might be judged, and from this shadow-show of beauty, eighteen-year-old SHIRLEY O'HARA was selected. On these pages we give photographs of the winner and her silhouette, and also of competitors and theirs as recorded by " Life," so that our readers may get an inkling of the difficulty which the judges must have had in making their selection !

MARGIE STEWART, *a competitor, and her silhouette.*

DOROTHY MALONEY, *a*

This picture, taken during the filming of " The Ghost Ship," shows how SHIRLEY O'HARA'S *shadow was cast.*

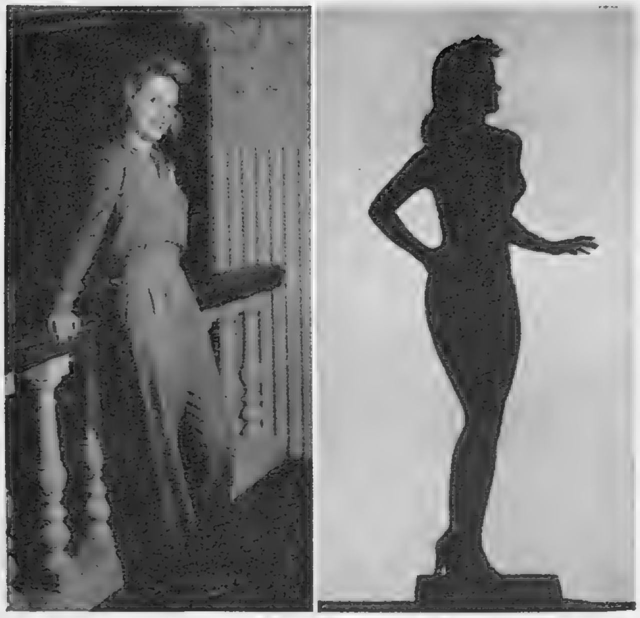
BARBARA HALE, *a competitor, and her silhouette.*

BARBARA COLEMAN,

HOLLYWOOD'S SHAPELIEST SHADOW-GIRL: WINNER

N.B. A Coloured plate is inserted in this issue.

tor, and her silhouette.



DAUN KENNEDY, *a competitor, and her silhouette.*

SHIRLEY O'HARA, *the winner, posing behind the screen in order to cast her shadow.*

petitor, and her silhouette.

ELAINE RILEY, *a competitor, and her silhouette.*

petitor, and her silhouette.

MARGARET LANDRY, *a competitor, and her silhouette.*

This is the curvilinear silhouette of SHIRLEY O'HARA, *which won her the rôle of the heroine in "The Ghost Ship."*

AND RUNNERS-UP IN A SCREEN CURVILINEAR CONTEST.

SECOND OFFICER MRS. ALTHEA PLACE, W.R.N.S., *wife of Lieut. B. C. G. Place, V.C., D.S.C. R.N., makes model ships as a hobby. Her husband helped her to begin this one.*

On leave at her parents' home in Grimsby, Mrs. Place is making up a parcel of clothing for despatch to her husband, who is a prisoner of war in enemy hands.

THE WIFE OF A "TIDDLER" SUBMARINE V.C.

TWO Commanders of midget submarines ("tiddlers," in R.N. parlance), Lieut. Basil Charles Godfrey Place, D.S.C., R.N., and Lieut. Donald Cameron, were awarded the V.C. for their daring attack on the "Tirpitz" in a Norwegian fjord on September 22, 1943. Both are prisoners of war. On March 8 we gave at-home studies of Mrs. Donald Cameron; here are a series of portraits of MRS. B. C. G. PLACE, who is an officer in the W.R.N.S. She had only been married seven weeks when her husband set out on his dangerous mission, and it was four months before she heard that he is alive and safe in a prisoner-of-war camp.

Mrs. Place shows her father, MR. HARRY TICKLER, *the jam manufacturer, a plaque which Lieut. B. C. G. Place used to carry in his submarine.*

Second Officer Mrs. Place with her sister, SUSAN, *a member of the Women's County Auxiliary Constabulary. They are reading the official letter giving the news that Lieut. Place is a prisoner of war.*

MRS. PAUL TRIQUET, *formerly Miss Alberte Chenier, of Ottawa, with* YOLANDE, *aged eight, and* CLAUDE, *aged ten.*

THE FRENCH-CANADIAN V.C. AND HIS FAMILY.

MAJOR PAUL TRIQUET, *Royal 22me Regiment, second Canadian to win the V.C. in this war: a portrait taken when he was Regimental Sergeant-Major.*

CAPTAIN (now ACTING MAJOR) PAUL TRIQUET, a French-Canadian born in 1908 at Cabano, Province of Quebec, has been awarded the V.C. for his determined leadership and example, and superb contempt of the enemy in an action on the Adriatic front on December 14, with the Eighth Army. His company of the Royal 22me Regiment, with the support of a Canadian Armoured Regiment, was given the task of securing Casa Berardi, an important strategical point on which the capture of the key road-junction on the main Ortona-Orsogna lateral was dependent. All his company officers and half the men were wounded at the outset, but he rallied and encouraged the remainder, and by a display of superb courage and leadership gained the outskirts of Casa Berardi, and held the position with two sergeants and fifteen men until the remainder of the battalion took Casa Berardi and relieved them the next day. Major Triquet joined the Canadian Army in 1927; and was commissioned in 1941.

MIRACLE FILM OF LOURDES,

The sordid home of the Soubirous family: out-of-work father François (ROMAN BOHNEN), *washerwoman mother Louise* (ANNE REVERE) *and delicate, dreamy Bernadette* (JENNIFER JONES).

Bernadette sees her first vision of the Virgin as a Beautiful Young Woman near the River Gave when gathering firewood, and is overcome with the mystery and glory.

Bernadette repeatedly visits the grotto, and kneels in prayer, convinced that her visions are really those of the Virgin, and that she must obey the commands given to her.

Huge crowds assemble to view the miracle that Bernadette is to ask the Virgin to perform; but the roses do not materialize. Instead, Bernadette washes her hands and face in the sand, which the Virgin declares to be a spring.

Huge crowds visit the spring and the grotto, and when Bernadette goes there for the fifteenth and last time, she is hailed as a Holy One. She denies sanctity, and says she has only seen a Beautiful Lady.

When Peyramale, Dean of Lourdes, first hears the stories of Bernadette's visions, he sends for her and tells her that she must confess that they are just fancies, but she persists that she is speaking the truth.

"THE SONG OF BERNADETTE," due at the New Gallery on March 27, is Twentieth Century-Fox's film of Franz Werfel's book, reconstructing the amazing story of Bernadette Soubirous, the peasant girl of Lourdes, who in 1858 saw visions of the Virgin Mary and discovered the healing spring of water which since then has been regularly visited by some 600,000 pilgrims a year. The picture was directed by Henry King, and produced by William Perlberg, with a previously unknown actress, JENNIFER JONES, in the title-rôle. Her performance is so sensitive, beautiful and convincing that she has been

[Continued opposite.

"THE SONG OF BERNADETTE."

Vital Dutour (VINCENT PRICE) *tells Bernadette that she is suffering from hallucinations, and must not visit the grotto again, but she maintains that she has seen the visions.*

The disappointed and mocking crowds have dispersed, but Antoine Nicolau (WILLIAM EYTHE) *spots a trickle of water in the dry sand. Half-blind Bouriette* (SIG RUMAN) *washes his eyes in it—and his sight is restored!*

Peyramale realises that Bernadette is destined to consecrate her life to God, and arranges to go to Nevers in order to enter her novitiate. Nicolau gives her a bouquet of white roses when he says good-bye.

Bernadette tells Peyramale, Dean of Lourdes (CHARLES BICKFORD), *that the Virgin has said that processions must visit the grotto. He bids her ask for a miracle—that a broom shall blossom like a rose-bush.*

News of the miracle of Bouriette's sight spreads through the countryside, and when Croisine (EDITH BARRETT) *and Charles Bouhouhorts* (MANART KIPPEN *immerse their dying and crippled baby in the spring, it is cured.*

Arrived at Nevers, Bernadette takes the name of Marie Bernarde. She performs humble tasks, supervised by her former teacher, Sister Marie Therese Vauzous (GLADYS COOPER), *and finally takes the veil.*

Continued.]
awarded the 1943 "Oscar," the Hollywood Academy's statuette for the best performance by a woman in 1943. The picture has roused much enthusiasm in America, and the London première on March 27 at 2.30 will be an important event. The entire proceeds for this gala performance are to be given to Toc H War Services Fund.

The Germans besieged Paris in 1871, and the people queued for bread just as they did in 1914-18, and again to-day.

Paris, 1890. The French craze for bicycling brought with it weddings on bicycles. Uncle Jules Froment (RAIMU) *mounts behind niece Estelle* (SUZY PRIM).

SMUGGLED OUT OF FRANCE: DUVIVIER'S "HEART OF A NATION" AT THE ACADEMY.

THE Academy Cinema, closed since the Battle of Britain, has reopened with "Heart of a Nation"—a French film showing the passing of the years 1871-1940 over Paris, with its three attacks by Germany. It was completed three days before the Nazis marched into Paris. The invaders were well-informed by their Fifth Column, and destroyed any film which touched criticism of the *Herrenvolk*, but Paul Graetz, the producer, hid one lavender print [*Continued below.*

To the famous MOULIN ROUGE *in the Naughty 'Nineties visitors flocked to see Les Girls kicking up their heels while they sang the popular song of the moment—"Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay."*

Marie Froment (MICHELE MORGAN) *dreams her sixteen-year-old dreams, watching her reflection in a mirror as she dresses in the superabundant "undies" of those days.*

Continued.]
of this Duvivier film, and bit by bit it was smuggled out to Hollywood, where Charles Boyer recorded an introduction and made a narration in English to accompany it. "Heart of a Nation" stars Michele Morgan and Raimu, and tells the story of Pierre Froment, a peasant of Montmartre, his descendants, and their reaction to German aggression three times in the family history.

In 1906. The modern aeroplane's ancestor is born. Alain Froment (JEAN MERCANTON) *goes mad keen on the new flying-machines; shouts instructions to his twin sister Marie.*

NOT QUITE THE FIVE INCHES!

When OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND *took an on-stage bath in the gay and impudent new Warner screen comedy* "PRINCESS O'ROURKE," *she was not tied down by the British wartime 5-in.-only rule. On the contrary, director and author Norman Krasna had two rules about the sequence—"water cloudy with milk and plenty of it"—with the charming though decorous result illustrated by our still. Olivia is a Princess of some mythical kingdom who marries an American transport co-pilot from Brooklyn, Eddie O'Rourke.*

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

MORE than most novelists Miss Vicki Baum is preoccupied by love. Her chief characters are nearly always "in love"—perhaps more in love than loving. It is the illness, the fever, she describes, rather than the emotional state it leaves behind, the love of the footlights rather than of the domestic hearth. But her characters, certainly the characters in her later books, have been in and out of love so often that the experience is not attended by much discomfort or sense of strangeness. "Once in Vienna" belongs to her earlier, more lyrical period. In feeling it is symbolised by "Tristan." This opera, a performance of which makes the climax of the story, is one of the works of art in which the experience of being in love is most nearly expressed. Not every opera-goer, nor even every Wagnerian, can sustain for four hours the mood of despairing ecstasy evoked by its opening phrases. But music speaks to the emotions more directly than literature can, and Miss Baum wisely introduces into her novel other elements than the love felt by three women for Hannes Rassiem, the handsome middle-aged tenor, and the love which he returned to at least two of them. One was his wife, la Kouczowska, an operatic star once more famous than himself, but now losing her voice; the other two were young girls, pupils in his singing-class. Elis was rich and came of a good family; she was "precocious and sentimental," she had the artistic temperament highly developed; she was "afraid of reality"; she said "No to life and yes to death." Rassiem once kissed her in an idle moment, hence her tragedy; but perhaps it would have come in any case, so peculiar and unhappy were her upbringing and heredity. Dima, the natural child of a Viennese grandee by a mother who took life as it came, was the exact opposite of Elis and eager for experience; but even so, her love for Rassiem, though she enjoyed the bliss of being his mistress, cost her much misery. The negative and positive attitudes to life, symbolised in Elis and Dima, are the pillars of the intellectual structure of the book, and they are strengthened, by the development in Rassiem's relationship to his wife, whom he adored, but whose attitude to him, determined by the nervous crisis of losing her voice, was capricious to the point of being cruel. In a sense his *affaire* with Dima clears the way for a reunion with his wife.

The story is bathed in traditional Viennese glamour which, whether genuine or not, seems doubly nostalgic now. One can hardly deny that, like all Miss Baum's books, it tends to be over-emotionalised; and the tragedy of Elis, which might be convincing in opera, is too operatic for fiction. Her knowledge of human nature is not perhaps so great as her sympathy with it; but both are outstanding, and in this story they are reinforced by a freshness of emotion and a kind of lyrical precipitancy.

A Disagreeable Hero.

Miss Helen Beauclerk tells the story of another emotional development—but here love's onset is much less easy, and is continually blocked by a temperament that seems neither capable nor desirous of receiving it. Miss Beauclerk has had the courage to make her hero in many ways a thoroughly disagreeable and unsympathetic person, and the fact that John knows, and to some extent deplores this does not make him the more likeable. "A harsh, stormy personality, a cold, unfeeling man" is the verdict of his mistress, and she was not far wrong. One cannot altogether blame him for being disagreeable to Millicent. But it is difficult to forgive him for being odious to his wife, who put up with all his tantrums until he frightened her into running away.

Naturally there were extenuating circumstances, and these are revealed in the self-review flash-back which, occupying a large part of the book, illuminates the present as well as the past. Extravagant, flamboyant, dishonest and overpoweringly male, his father had exercised an unfortunate influence on his childhood. After Cambridge, where he had been puritanically chaste, he swung to the other extreme and had *affaire* after *affaire*, all entered into without any feeling for the woman concerned, except that of jealousy towards possible rivals. It was in Venice, after this feeling had apparently only just stopped short of murder, that in a fit of nervous misery he decided to marry Anne. When the war came (the war is the "present" of the story) his vanity had to endure many blows. Unsuccessful as a creative writer, he also had the mortification of being turned down for the Army. His egoism could find no balm for these affronts, and his self-dissatisfaction leads to a nervous or psychic illness which, in its turn, leads to the crisis of the story, and John's conversion.

The Evolution of a Soul.

That this conversion should be convincing is a measure of Miss Beauclerk's success. "Where the Treasure Is" is an extremely subtle study of the evolution of a soul, and a consistent portrait emerges from it. John's type—the intellectual amorist who does not like women, but cannot do without them—is fairly familiar, but Miss Beauclerk has rung many changes on it and thrown many sidelights. How revealing it is when John says, "I warn you, I'm not a proper Briton; I can't see a joke." The arrogance of this admission puts one off, yet one cannot help respecting him for it, and all the more since it is so nearly true. His lack of humour came partly from vanity, partly from a kind of honesty that would not look asquint at a truth by pretending it was funny. He always holds our interest.

Partisans in Eastern Europe.

Lord Dunsany is a natural writer with charming gifts of style, humour and poetry. These gifts do not quite come into their own in "Guerrilla," the story of an heroic resistance to the German oppressor in a country of Eastern Europe whose partisans think of it as "The Land." Hlaka, their leader, is so stern a character he scarcely seems more human than the Nazis themselves; the hero is any brave young man fighting to free his country; and the engagements wherein the immensely superior German forces begin to be slowly picked off, man by man, do not differ greatly from those we expect to find in this kind of story. But they are described with, every now and then, those touches of humour, or poetry, or pure naturalness, which we can rely on from this author, however relaxed his mood. "Guerrilla" is worth reading not only for the fine spirit behind it, and the music of its prose, but for the sketch of the Anglo-Irish airman who appears, perhaps too much a *deus ex machina*, at the end. "*Moi, je suis Malone.*" His attitude, at once respectful and patronising, to the guerrilla chieftain, his feeling that he must congratulate and give advice, is hit off with very few strokes, and is a little triumph of affectionate satire. At the end, Lord Dunsany wanders off to assure us that some of the minor characters are being well looked after in South Africa—a really wanton digression, but it includes some exciting impressions of the Dark Continent from the air.

An Incident in Java.

"The Story of Dr. Wassell" is, in outline, at any rate, a true story, and it tells how a Lieutenant-Commander in the United States Naval Reserve, who had once been a medical missionary in China, took charge of a handful of American sailors and piloted them to safety when the Japanese invaded Java. The men were in a Dutch hospital, suffering severely from burns, when he first began to attend them; few of them were fit to travel when the moment for evacuation came. This story differs from nearly every other story about the war in being written in a very low tone. Mr. Hilton resists, or is untempted by, the wish to work his readers up. There is no snappy dialogue; Dr. Wassell's little jokes with the men are almost childish in their simplicity; he is an Innocent Abroad, almost unbelievably unwary and unsophisticated, and most of the people he meets respond to his ingenuousness. There is no "toughness" in his nature; he carries about with him the atmosphere of a Sunday School Treat, as witness his innocent delight when he brings the men ice-creams and is allowed to smoke.

At the same time the Doctor, like the author, has the wisdom of his simplicity. He reflects that "many a man will lay down his life for another country more willingly than he will eat that country's delicacies without grumbling"; he observes how, on board the *Janssens*, one's mind was diverted from danger by the "stale whiff of civilisation" that "clung to her like a hangover." Mr. Hilton could be clever if he liked; he simply doesn't want to be; and the gain to his story is immense, for humanity shines through it like daylight, and all the pathetic scenes at the beginning, and the terrible scenes at the end, are far more telling than if they had been lit by floodlights or footlights. His is pre-eminently the art that conceals itself. We feel that nothing has been manipulated, everything happened precisely as we are told it did. Even heroism seems part of the characters' ordinary make-up, hardly distinguishable from their grumbling. Some will call the book sentimental, but it merely lacks that hard, shiny shell which most people in modern fiction, and many in modern life, wear as a protection.

THE LONDON GALLERIES.

Agnew's, 43, Old Bond Street. 71st Exhibition of English water-colours. Till Easter.

Leicester, Leicester Square. The Michael Sadler collection of prints and engravings. New paintings by Ivon Hitchens. Till Easter.

Fine Art Society, 148, New Bond Street. Dürer, Rembrandt and some Modern Etchings. Also Early English water-colours. During March.

Redfern, 20, Cork Street. Paintings by Christopher Wood and V. Khmeluk; Water-colours by Derwent Lees. Till April 1.

At 61, St. James's Street. The Polish Air Force Exhibition. Till April 10.

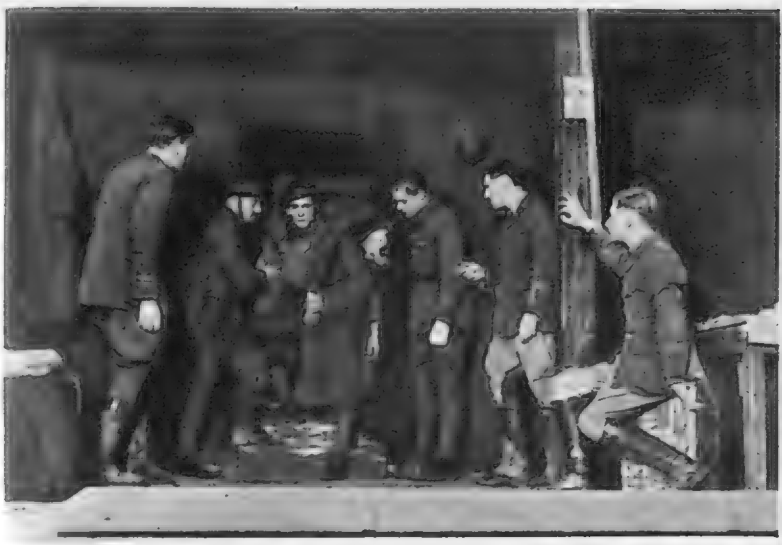
National Gallery, Trafalgar Square. Paintings by Official War Artists. Canadian War Paintings.

BOOKS REVIEWED.

Once in Vienna. By Vicki Baum. (*Bles*; 8s. 6d.)
Where the Treasure Is. By Helen Beauclerk. (*Gollancz*; 8s. 6d.)
Guerrilla. By Lord Dunsany. (*Heinemann*; 8s.)
The Story of Dr. Wassell. By James Hilton. (*Macmillan*; 6s.)

"WHITAKER'S ALMANACK."

Whitaker's Almanack 1944, seventy-sixth annual volume, did not owing to war conditions, make its appearance until February, but it has retained its peacetime appearance, its clear printing, and remarkable quality of supplying all the answers. The Diary of the War provides an account of the achievements of the Allied Nations' forces, and various statistical tables of post-war reconstruction are included. *Whitaker* is, as usual, published in three editions: the Library, leather, with thirteen coloured maps, at 21s.; the Complete, red and green cloth, at 10s.; and the Abridged, orange paper, at 6s.



John Cavan (MICHAEL GOODLIFFE) *is carried dying into the dug-out on the shoulders of Macey* (PAT SHERRARD). *The other soldiers are (l. to r.) Tilley* (DESMOND LLEWELYN), *Jenner* (JIM CLEAVER), *Berry* (DAN CUNNINGHAM), *Shaw* (DAN RITCHIE), *and Robins* (MIKE LANGHAM).

Lady Cavan (BRIAN McIRVINE) *talks quietly with her son John.*

P.O.W. CAMP STAGES COWARD WORLD PREMIÈRE: "POST MORTEM."

OUR prisoners of war in Germany find play-producing one of the finest pastimes for their hours of enforced leisure. Learning their parts, making costumes and décor stimulate the imagination, and the talent these productions bring to light is universal and amazing. To help the men at Oflag VII.b, Noel Coward gave them special permission to perform his "Post Mortem"—a play which will probably never be seen in London. The action takes place in a dug-out in the last war, in the mind of a dying soldier during the split second preceding his death. His mind is projected thirteen years ahead, and the play shows the reactions of those years on the people in his life. Every now and then the guns are heard; then the dream strengthens, and he becomes delirious. It is brilliantly worked out.

Cocktail-party of the 'twenties, as dreamed by John in his last moment. Note the fashions: the jewelled sandals, the pink toe-nails, the decorated skirt, the hat. L. to r.—Monica, John, Eggie Brace (RONALD GOWANS), *and Kitty Harris* (JOHN PEACOCK).

John Cavan (MICHAEL GOODLIFFE; *standing*) *drinks with friends—(l. to r.) "Babe" Robins, Tilley and Shaw.*

John with Monica Chellerton (BRIAN McIRVINE). *The steward is played by* PETER FRASER.

ANGUILLA'S JOURNEY.*

By F. G. TURNBULL.

IT was in the last glimmer of dusk that Anguilla, the elver, the little eel, swam with hundreds of her kindred into the Lintieburn's first tawny pool, cradled in ferns in Elvadale. From her birthplace, 3000 miles away in Atlantic deeps, she had come; and now, when grown to the length and thickness of a pencil, she had reached the most perilous point in all her tremendous journey.

Her destination, a spring-fed pool in the shadow of the beeches, lay only a few yards away. But to reach it she must climb 20 ft. of moss-green rock, where the overflow from the pool sprayed down in a white cascade. And here each day the eel-killers waited—Kragg, the heron, a gaunt and omnivorous old vagabond, and Ug, the carrion-crow, with his mate—a villainous, voracious pair. Here, too, at night, prowled the inevitable rats.

Unaware of danger, and with other elvers moving in a wriggling swarm about her, Anguilla began to climb the fall, avoiding the rushing water, but moving within the spray-line that she might not lose the stream.

For three days she clung and wriggled and rested, gaining only a fraction of an inch at a time. Then, when she had only another yard to go, the movement of a yellow frog, who lived in a niche near the top of the fall, alarmed her, and down she tumbled to the pool again.

Within five minutes of her abrupt descent, Anguilla commenced to climb once more. But her chance of survival was diminishing rapidly. Her preservation so far she owed to the multitude of her kin; the heron, the crows and the rats, strive as they might, could not eat all the elvers at once. But with every day and night the shoal of little travellers had shrunk. Now only a few score remained, and Kragg and the crows had fallen to fighting over the remnants of the feast.

Matters reached their climax on the third day after Anguilla had begun her second ascent of the waterfall in Elvadale. During the night she and six others, all that now remained of the great company of elvers, had rested in recesses about the rock, while rats that crawled about the ledges sought for them in vain.

At dawn one hungry rat lingered too long—lingered until the black forms of Ug and his mate appeared over the beeches. There was no time for retreat; the startled rodent scrambled urgently into a niche near the spot where the yellow frog holed-up. Ug and his mate had already found an elver apiece when the heron drifted silently down and jabbed viciously at the sooty pair with his beak as he passed to a perch. The crows tumbled aside and landed on a moss-bearded spur, croaking awful threats.

In the course of that morning, the heron found four of the last five elvers and slid them wriggling down his long throat. Then he settled to watch for others that might lurk about the crevices. Only Anguilla remained now; she climbed laboriously and unseen through a deep fissure which at its upper end opened out just four inches from the top of the fall.

Throughout the afternoon and into the evening the hunters watched and waited, while the solitary elver squirmed nearer and nearer to her goal. On a little shelf near her, and partly concealed by a pendant of silver-grey moss, sat the yellow frog, motionless except for his pulsing throat. But the rat a little farther away made not the slightest movement at all.

Neither the crows nor Kragg, despite their sharp eyes, saw elver, frog or rat. Still they waited, watching each other closely, until, perturbed at the unwonted emptiness of his craw, Kragg decided at last to move. With a hoarse bark of derision at the two black birds on the opposite side of the fall, he went down like a ragged grey parachute and lit in the pool below to hunt for little trout. Presently the crows concluded that they themselves were wasting time here, and with a croak that was a blistering oath they said farewell to the heron and flew off to hunt elsewhere.

Just before dusk they returned, still hungry, to see whether any more elvers had appeared. In their absence, the heron had paddled fifty yards downstream; but when he saw the crows return he came striding hurriedly back. If anything edible had arrived at the fall in the interval, he, as owner of the fishing, must have it.

Ug glared malevolently at the approaching heron and croaked: *Pawk, cruk-cruk, craaa!*—which, interpreted, would burn holes in asbestos. Kragg opened his beak to reply in even more incandescent terms, while both crows took a breath to repeat in unison Ug's earlier remark. But not a sound came from any of them. For, simultaneously, they spotted Anguilla. She had wriggled clear of the fissure and, with her head in a feather of water that obscured her vision, was struggling to cover the final three inches of her 3000-mile journey.

Reaction was instantaneous. Kragg gave a mighty flap of his pinions and bounded with dripping toes from the water. Ug and his sooty spouse pitched out from their perch, and together the trio of assassins cut up with a swish of wings at the tiny traveller from the sea.

Ug arrived first. He reached out with his black bill. But before he could touch Anguilla a ten-inch spike flashed out and nearly struck his head off. Thereafter Kragg shot his beak towards the elver. At the same instant, with a furious thrust of her heavy bill, the hen crow almost brained him. The heron lurched backward, and for a moment all three birds hung before the fall. There they spotted the frog and the rat in their niches.

There was a fleeting pause, then a wild mêlée of thrashing pinions and stabbing beaks. By all the eels of Elvadale, an elver, a frog and a rat together! It wasn't (*Ouk, craaa!* swore Ug as the spear stung him) a meal; it was (*Cruk, oke, cruk!* cursed Ug's mate, with a spike in her ear) a real craw-stuffer (*Squaake!* screeched Kragg as the crows battered him) of a feast. For thirty seconds the birds spun and flapped and fought, while the elver battled against the resistance of the water, gaining a little at every wriggle.

At length, with a perfectly delivered thrust, Kragg dropped Ug, a flapping bundle of black rags, into the pool. And while the dazed crow clawed his way into the shallows, the heron hurled his sable mate against the rock, where she clung, her senses reeling.

At the crest of the fall Anguilla curled her head over the lip of the rock and struggled to pull herself over the edge to safety in the beech-shaded pond.

The angry crows saw Kragg couch his spear. Like lightning it struck forward. A burst of drops spurted from the glassy curve of water where the fall began. In Kragg's beak there was a gleam of something wet that wriggled. His neck writhed convulsively, and Anguilla, the elver from the far Atlantic deeps, had gone. Again the heron's beak lashed out, and the yellow frog followed in the wake of Anguilla. The rat did not wait. Its eyes bulging with terror, it leapt from the rock in an attempt to reach the water.

Kragg's long bill flickered with speed, and the rat's flight was arrested in the air. Holding his squealing captive by a leg, the heron fell hurriedly to the pool and rammed the rat beneath the surface. Up it came again. Kragg struck savagely downward, plunging it under once more.

The rat's struggles ended quickly. Kragg lifted the carcass dripping from the water and in six great gulps he swallowed it whole. For a few seconds he stood motionless, his crop bulging and an expression of intense satisfaction in his eyes. He beamed affably on the truculent crows and almost smiled, so supremely full and happy was he.

Now he glanced aloft. Dusk had come and an early star winked through the trees. Bedtime. Spreading his pinions he rose from the water. The crows watched him rise clear of the beech-tops; then, with a flame of recklessness in his eyes, Ug barked to his mate: *Croke!* meaning: "Come on. Quick!"

In twenty seconds the vengeful pair overtook the leisurely heron. This was where they wanted him: high in the air, where there was manœuvring room. One after the other they lunged. Ug had to swerve violently to avoid the heron's beak-thrust, but the hen crow cut Kragg's scalp almost from eye to eye. Alarmed at the furious onslaught, Kragg attempted to increase his altitude. Normally he could out-climb the crows with ease. But his cargo of fish, elver, frog and rat could not be hoisted to the heavens as lightly as an empty crop, and he could not evade his determined pursuers.

As Ug and his mate swooped and stabbed, Kragg became thoroughly scared. Frenziedly he sought to outspeed them in level flight; but the furious crows headed him off and turned him back in the way he had come.

Behind the birds a train of feathers twirled, more grey than black. Again and again the heron winced and squawked as a flinty beak scored a red gash beneath his plumage. Terror seized him. He was being murdered in cold blood.

For him there was but one means of escape: he must jettison his cargo. His neck writhed, a lump appeared to slide up it, and the rat dropped from his gaping beak to vanish with a crackle of twigs among the trees.

The black warriors did not pause in the attack. Urgently the heron disgorged the frog. It was still alive, but was killed when it struck the ground. Still the nimble crows battered their bulky victim. In desperation Kragg gaped again, and the elver appeared, to fall away, still writhing.

At this gratifying sacrifice the crows considered honour satisfied. Now to satisfy their appetites. Abruptly they left the heron and dived in pursuit of the little eel. And with the two black beaks, open and eager to seize her, just beyond her tail-tip, Anguilla went down through a gap in the foliage.

In the shadows beneath the beeches there was a little splash, a shower of drops and a pair of crows that uttered croaks of annoyance as they swept out of their dive. And Anguilla, the elver, bewildered but unhurt, swam slowly down to the depths of the pond into which she had fallen—the pond above the waterfall where beeches grow in Elvadale.

[THE END.]

**All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.*

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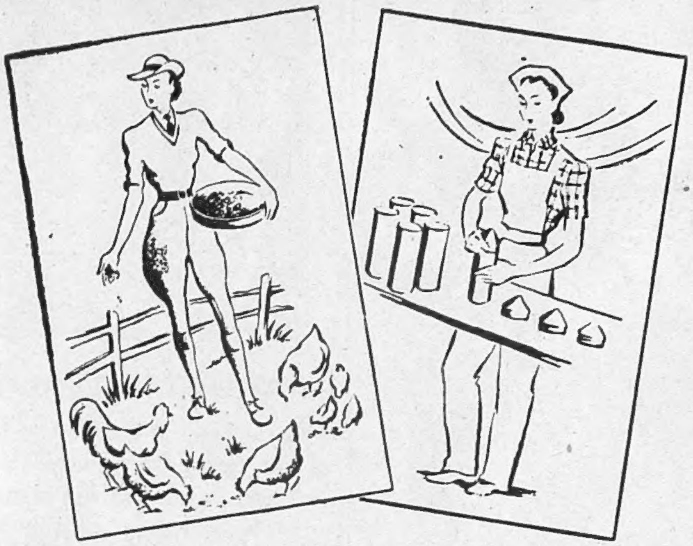

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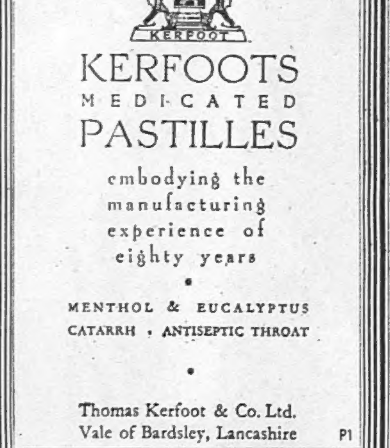

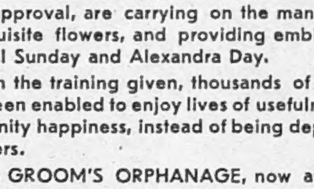

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